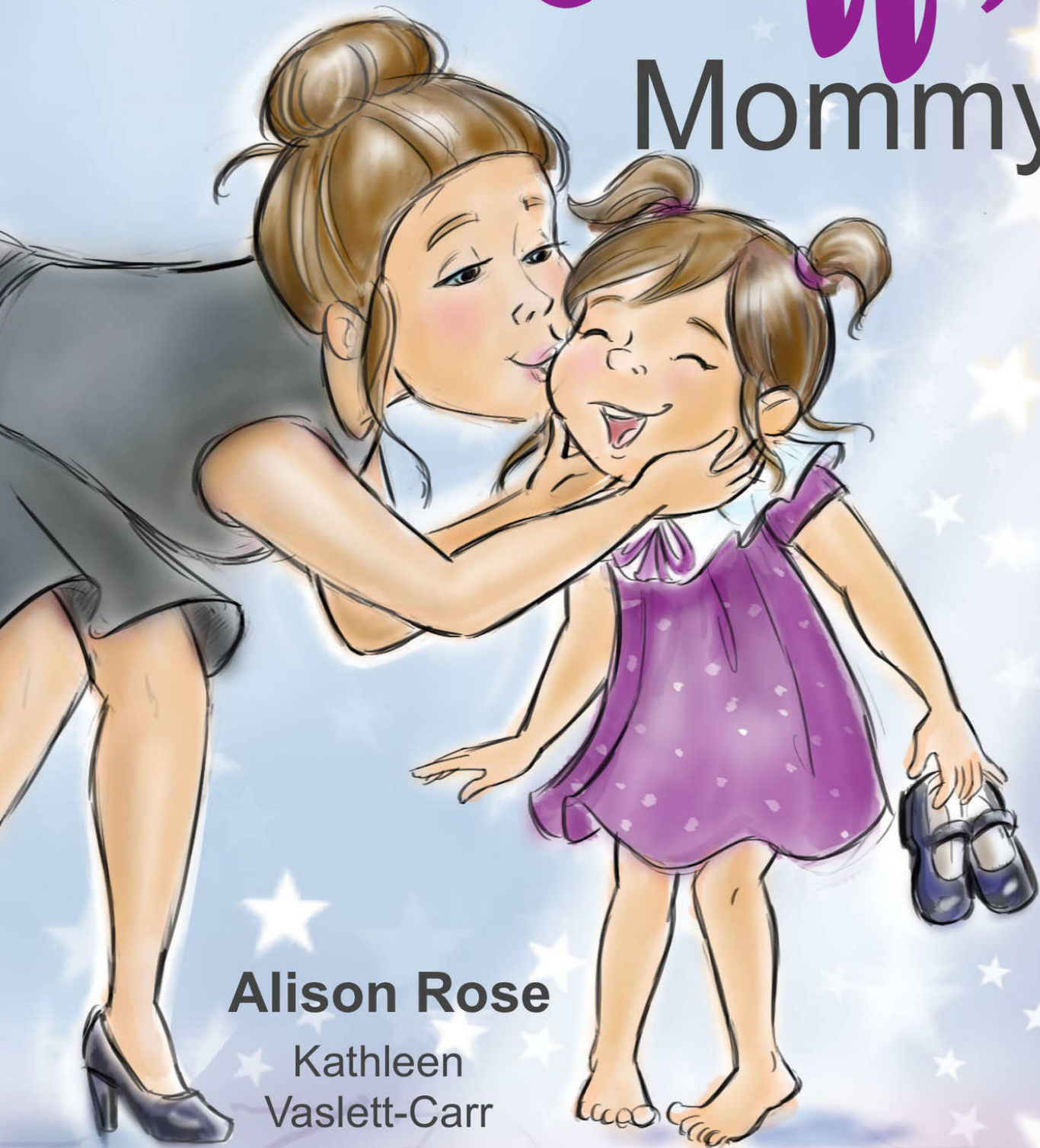


Shoes Off, Mommy?



Alison Rose

Kathleen
Vaslett-Carr

DEDICATION

For my mom,
(My #1 fan)

You let me be me.



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My name is Alison
but my mom calls me Ali.



One day, in the spring, Mommy and
I were outside in the garden.



It was a sunny day.

When we were pulling weeds,
I looked up at her and asked,
"Shoes off, Mommy? Shoes off?"



"Okay Ali," she said, and then she bent down to take off my rubber boots.



I could feel the soil underneath
my bare feet.



"Ahh! It's squishy!"

I twisted and turned in the
squishy soil, and my feet got dirty,
but it didn't bother me.



I was free!

One day, in the summer,
Mommy and I went to the beach.



It was a hot day.

When we stepped in the sand,
I looked up at her and asked,
"Shoes off, Mommy? Shoes off?"



"Ok Ali," she said, and then she bent down to take off my sandals.



I could feel the sand underneath
my bare feet.



"Ouch! It's hot!"

I jumped up and down in the hot sand, but it didn't bother me.



I was free!

One day, in the fall,
Mommy and I went to the park.



It was a windy day.

When we stepped on the grass,
I looked up at her and asked,
"Shoes off, Mommy? Shoes off?"



"Okay Ali," she said,
and then she bent down to
take off my tennis shoes.



I could feel the grass underneath
my bare feet.



"Oh! It's wet!"

I ran through the wet grass,
but it didn't bother me.



I was free!

One day, in the winter, Mommy and I went
to see the ballet.



It was a chilly day.

When the lights went down,
I looked up at her and asked,
"Shoes off, Mommy? Shoes off?"



"Okay Ali," she said, and then she bent down to take off my fancy shoes.



I could feel the concrete floor underneath
my bare feet.



"Brrrr! It's freezing!"

I wiggled my toes on the cold floor,
but it didn't bother me.



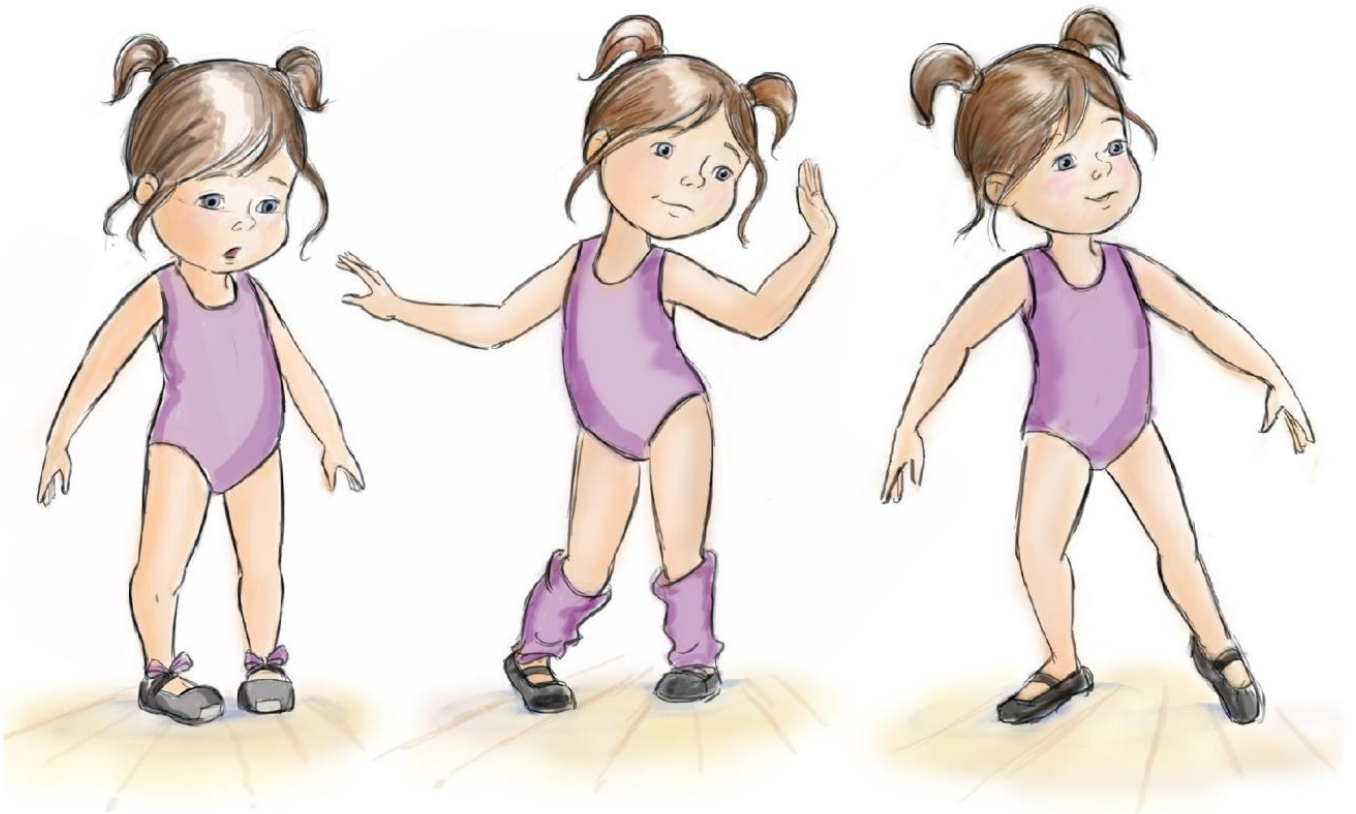
I was free!

After the show, I told Mommy I wanted to be a dancer when I grew up.



"*Okay Ali,*" she said, and then she bent down to give me a kiss.

So Mommy took me to every
kind of dance class.



Tap class, jazz class, and ballet class.

I was happy,
but something didn't feel right.



Then one day, Mommy took me to a modern
dance class.

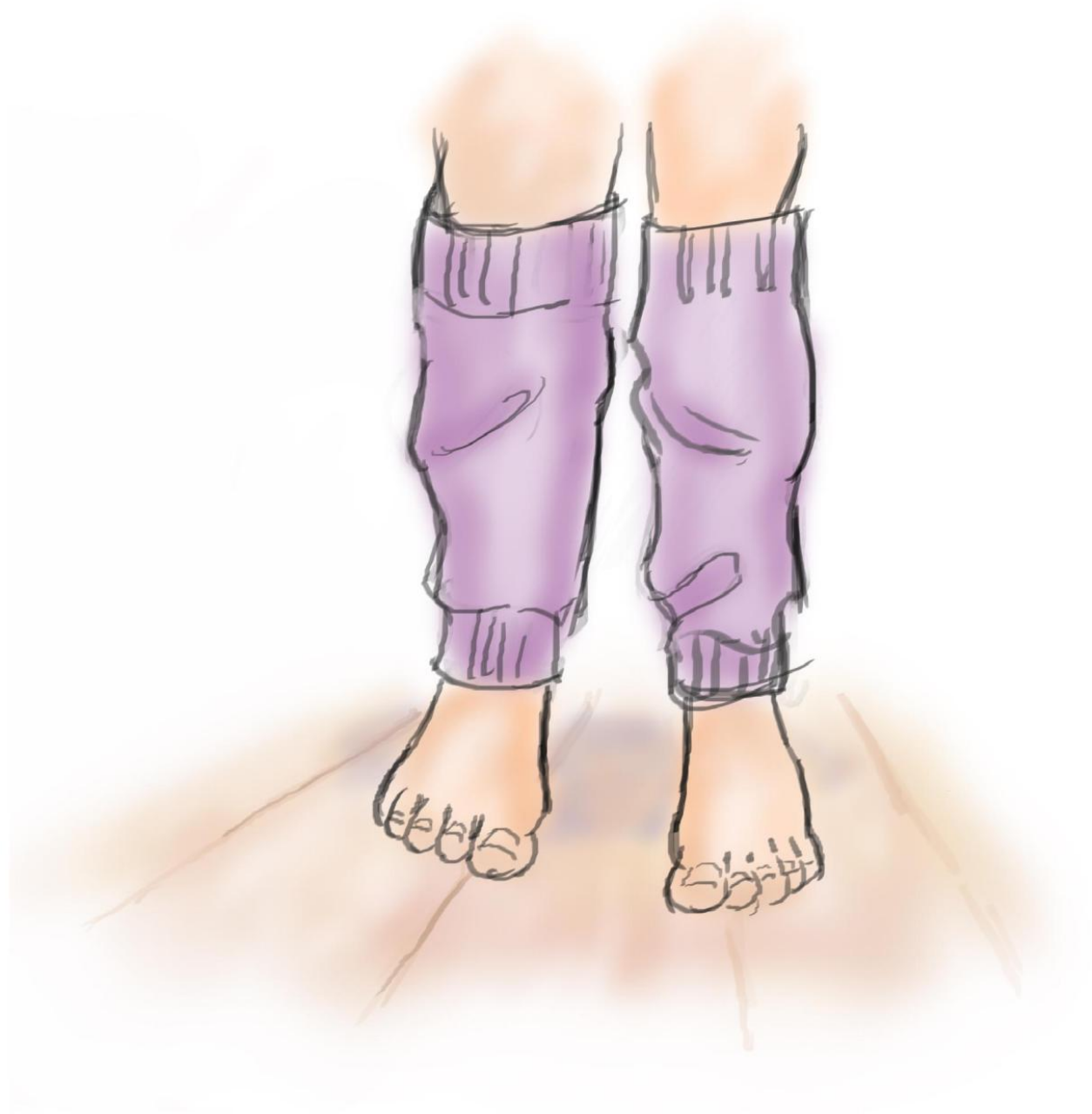


The teacher said to the class,
"Shoes off, everyone."



I looked up at Mommy with a big grin
and said, *"Shoes off, Mommy!
Shoes off!"*

I could feel the dance floor underneath my
bare feet.



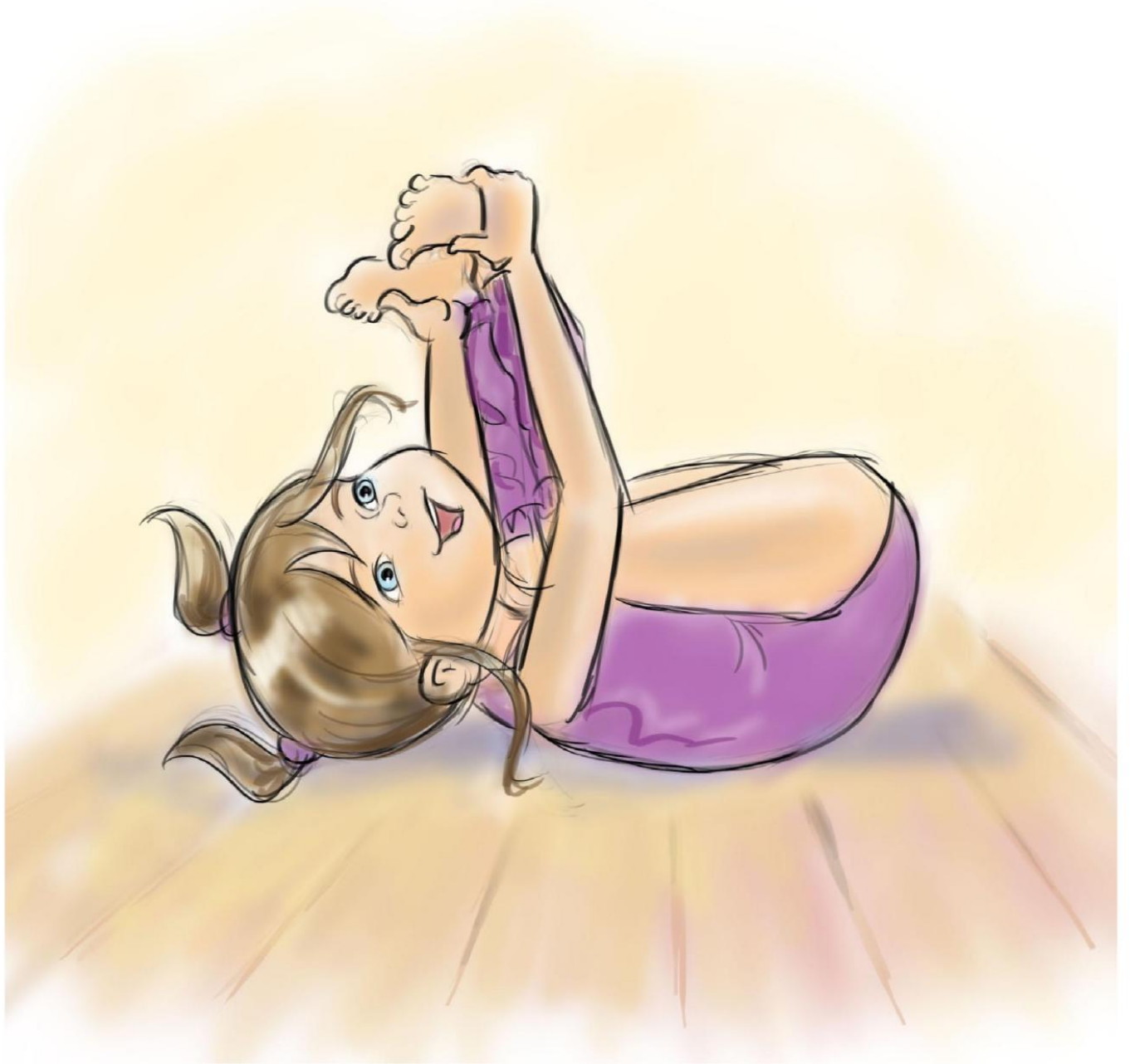


I twisted and turned.



I ran and jumped,

and wiggled my whole body.



My feet were sore,
but it didn't bother me.





I was free!

After weeks, months, and years of rehearsals, it's show time now.



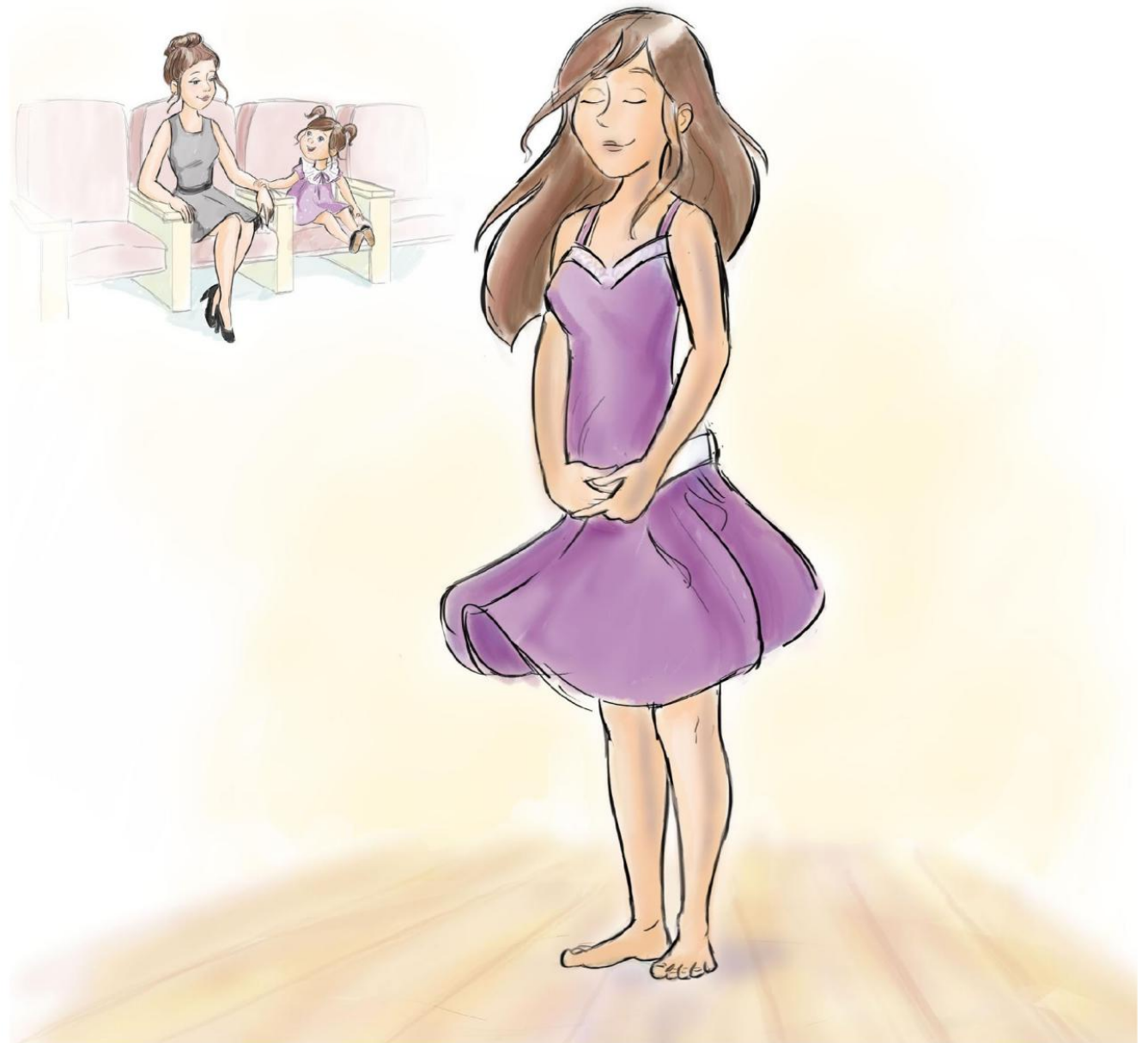
Today is my big day!

I can feel the stage underneath my feet as I practice behind the curtain.



Suddenly, the stage manager shouts,
"Places everyone!"

My heart begins to race and I am nervous.
But I take a deep breath and I remember
those times with my mom.



The curtain opens and the lights come up. I begin to dance, and although my feet are tired, it doesn't bother me.



Because never in my life have
I ever felt *so free!*





Author and dance educator Alison Rose and
illustrator Kathleen Vaslett-Carr team up together
in this inspirational story about a young girl's
journey to become a professional modern dancer.

I twisted and turned.
I ran and jumped.
I could feel the dance
floor underneath my
bare feet, and I was
free!

